

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A tape dispenser for dispensing a length of tape ready for application on a package, the dispenser comprising:

a frame with a storage area for storing tape therein;

a feed mechanism connected to the frame for feeding tape from the storage area;

a cutting mechanism connected to the frame for cutting the length of tape dispensed from the dispenser; and

an applicator connected to the frame and adapted for applying an additional element to the tape when the length of tape is dispensed and providing the length of tape with a predetermined characteristic,

wherein the additional element applied by the applicator is selected from a number of different additional elements each having a different predetermined characteristic so that when applied to the tape, each of the different additional elements provides the length of tape with a different corresponding predetermined characteristic.

2. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the different predetermined characteristics include the additional element being at least one of a marking indicia element, an adhesive element, a tape reinforcing element, a tape tear out element, a print element, an electro-optically readable element, or an electronic communication element.

3. The dispenser according to Claim 2, wherein the electronic communication element is an RFID device.
4. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the tape is at least one of a gummed tape, or a pressure sensitive tape.
5. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the tape is at least one of a paper, plastic or composite tape.
6. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the additional element is a tape reinforcement element, and wherein the dispensed length of tape comprises a tear out strip including the tape reinforcement element.
7. The dispenser according to Claim 6, wherein the tape reinforcement element has a pressure sensitive adhesive so that when applied by the applicator, the tape reinforcement element attaches to the tape.
8. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the applicator is removably mounted to the frame.
9. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the applicator has an element storage area, the element storage area being arranged to hold the additional element configured in a roll.
10. The dispenser according to Claim 1, further comprising an adhesive activation system for activating an adhesive on the dispensed length of tape.
11. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the different corresponding predetermined characteristic of the dispensed length of tape comprises the length of tape having at least one of a marking indicia thereon, an activated adhesive thereon, a tear out strip, an electro-

optically readable indicia thereon, or an electronic communication component thereon.

12. The dispenser according to Claim 11, wherein the cutting mechanism has a blade adapted for forming a pull tab for the tear out strip substantially simultaneously with cutting the tape in the dispenser to form the dispensed length of tape.

13. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the applicator is adapted to apply the additional element to the tape substantially continuously, wherein the additional element extends along the dispensed length of tape from a one end to an opposite end of the dispensed length of tape.

14. The dispenser according to Claim 1, wherein the tape dispenser is at least one of a case sealer, a portable tape dispenser or a hand held tape dispenser.

15. A sealing system for sealing a container, the system comprising:

a first tape;

a second tape; and

a dispenser for dispensing a length of tape ready for sealing the container, the dispenser having a first storage area for holding the first tape, a second storage area for holding the second tape, and a feed mechanism for feeding the first tape and the second tape through the dispenser, the feed mechanism being disposed for merging the first tape and second tape together so that the dispensed length of tape is a combination comprising at least

a portion of the first tape and at least another portion of the second tape,

wherein the second tape is selectable from a number of different tapes each having a different predetermined characteristic so that when selected as the second tape and combined with the first tape by the dispenser, each of the different tapes provide the dispensed length of tape with a different corresponding predetermined characteristic.

16. The system according to Claim 15, wherein the dispenser has a frame and a removable module mounted to the frame, and wherein the removable module comprises the second storage area and at least part of the feed mechanism for feeding the second tape from the second storage area.

17. The system according to Claim 16, wherein the frame has a handle sized and shaped for allowing a user to hold the dispenser during use.

18. The system according to Claim 15, wherein the dispenser is at least one of a case sealer, a portable dispenser adapted for being seated on a counter or table top, or a hand held dispenser.

19. The system according to Claim 15, wherein the at least a portion of the first tape forms a seal sealing the container when the dispensed length of tape is applied to the package, and wherein the second tape has an adhesive for adhering the second tape to the first tape.

20. The system according to Claim 15, wherein at least one of the first tape or the second tape has an adhesive so that when merged together by the feed mechanism, the first tape and second tape adhere to each other on contact.
21. The system according to Claim 15, wherein the different predetermined characteristics of the second tape include at least one of the second tape having a marking indicia thereon, the second tape having an electro-optically readable indicia thereon, the second tape comprising RFID's, the second tape being a tape reinforcing element, or the second tape being a tape tearing element.
22. The system according to Claim 15, wherein the second tape is a tape reinforcing element, and wherein the dispensed length of tape includes a tear out strip comprising the tape reinforcing element.
23. The system according to Claim 22, wherein the dispenser further comprises a cutting mechanism for cutting the length of tape dispensed from the dispenser, the cutting mechanism having a blade adapted to form a pull tab for the tear out strip substantially simultaneously with cutting the combined first tape and second tape for forming the length of tape dispensed by the dispenser.
30. A flat sheet material dispenser with a reconfigurable frame.